

REMARKS

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1-53 were pending in the above-identified patent application. Of those, claims 40-53 have been withdrawn from further consideration as being drawn to a non-elected invention. Applicant hereby affirms the telephonic election made by the undersigned on January 3, 2005 to prosecute the claims of Group I (device claims 1-39) in this patent application.

Claims 1, 4, 6, 10-12, 14-16, 18, 22, 25, and 27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Redmond et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,176,535 (hereinafter "Redmond"). Claim 17 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Redmond. Claims 2, 3, 23, 24, and 28-30 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Redmond in view of Williams et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,469,072. Claims 5 and 26 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Redmond in view of Roth U.S. Patent No. 6,762,941.

Claims 37-39 have been allowed. Claims 7-9, 13, 19-21, and 31-36 were objected to as being dependent upon rejected base claims, but were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims.

Summary of Applicant's Reply

Applicant notes with appreciation the allowance of claims 37-39 and the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 7-9, 13, 19-21, and 31-36.

Applicant has amended the specification to correct minor and obvious clerical errors.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the features of dependent claim 7 and additional features, and claim 7 has been cancelled. Claim 22 has been amended to incorporate

the features of dependent claim 31 and an additional feature, and claim 31 has been cancelled. Claims 8-21 and 32-34 have been amended to conform with the amendments to claims 1 and 22, respectively. Claim 37 has been amended to more particularly define the present invention and to correct a minor and obvious clerical error.

A Petition for a one-month extension of time to respond to the Office Action is being filed concurrently herewith.

Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement

Applicant filed a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement in this patent application on March 3, 2005. The Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement included a listing of references cited in counterpart International Application No. PCT/US2004/022318 ("the PCT application"), along with a copy of the International Search Report ("Search Report") for the PCT application.

In the PCT application, a Written Opinion of the International Searching Authority ("Written Opinion") was transmitted along with the Search Report. A copy of the Written Opinion is enclosed herewith. The Written Opinion includes objections to various claims of the PCT application based on the references cited in the Search Report. The claims examined by the International Searching Authority in the PCT application correspond to the original claims in this U.S. patent application.

The allowability of claims 1-6, 8-30, and 32-39 in view of the Search Report references and the Written Opinion is set forth below in connection with each independent claim.

Independent Claim 1

The Examiner has rejected claim 1 as being anticipated by Redmond. To facilitate allowance, applicant has amended claim 1 to incorporate the features of dependent claim 7, which the Examiner has indicated to be allowable. Applicant has also amended claim 1 to clarify that the tensioning guides are "mechanically separate" from the conductors, and that the loading fiber "is in contact" with the tensioning guide when the device is engaged with the electrical component. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 1 is now moot and should be withdrawn. Dependent claims 2-6 and 8-21 are allowable at least because independent claim 1 is allowable. Any rejections of these claims are also moot and should be withdrawn.

Applicant submits that amended claim 1 is also novel and nonobvious with respect to the references provided in the Search Report for the PCT application. In particular, applicant's amended claim 1 sets forth that a tensioning guide is disposed between and mechanically separate from first and second conductors of a contact interface. As shown in applicant's FIG. 43, for example, conductors 302 are coupled to loading fiber 304, and tensioning guide 816 is disposed between and mechanically separate from the conductors. None of the references in the Search Report show or suggest disposing a tensioning guide between conductors of a contact interface, such that the tensioning guide is mechanically separate from the conductors. Accordingly, applicant's amended claim 1 is novel and nonobvious with respect to the Search Report references.

Independent Claim 22

The Examiner has rejected claim 22 as being anticipated by Redmond. To facilitate allowance, applicant has amended claim 22 to incorporate the features of dependent claim 31, which the Examiner has indicated to be allowable, and to incorporate the feature that the

tensioning guides are "rigid." Accordingly, the rejection of claim 22 is now moot and should be withdrawn. Dependent claims 23-30 and 32-36 are allowable at least because independent claim 22 is allowable. Any rejections of these claims are also moot and should be withdrawn.

Applicant submits that amended claim 22 is also novel and nonobvious with respect to the references provided in the Search Report for the PCT application. In particular, applicant's amended claim 22 sets forth that a plurality of rigid tensioning guides are disposed on at least one side of each conductor of a contact interface. None of the references in the Search Report show or suggest disposing a rigid tensioning guide on at least one side of each conductor of a contact interface. Accordingly, applicant's amended claim 22 is novel and nonobvious with respect to the Search Report references.

Independent Claim 37

Claims 37-39 have been allowed by the Examiner. Applicant has amended claim 37 to further define that the tensioning guides are "rigid." In connection with the Search Report for the PCT application, applicant submits that amended claim 37 is novel and nonobvious with respect to the references provided in the Search Report. As set forth above in connection with claim 22, none of the references in the Search Report show or suggest disposing a rigid tensioning guide on at least one side of each conductor of a contact interface. Accordingly, applicant's amended claim 37 is novel and nonobvious with respect to the Search Report references.

Conclusion

The foregoing demonstrates that claims 1-6, 8-30, and 32-39 are patentable. This application is therefore in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and prompt allowance are accordingly respectfully requested.

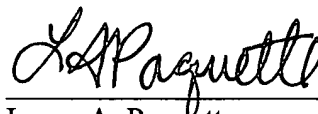
Authorization

The Director is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for this Reply, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 08-0219.

In the event that an extension of time is required, or which may be required in addition to that requested in a petition for an extension of time, the Director is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this response timely and is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time or credit any overpayment for an extension of time to Deposit Account No. 08-0219.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date: 4/27/05



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